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INDO PAKISTAN RELATIONS

BY

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Indo Pakistan Relations

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ABSTRACT

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Indo Pakistan Relations

Although the original idea of the partition of the Indian sub-continent can be linked to the ancient Islamic concept known as "Hezira" one needs not dig into the history of several centuries to study the background to the Indo-Pakistan relations¹. Pakistan was created in 1947 with the partition of India on the eve of her independence from three centuries of British rule. The emotions and ambitions of a handful of elite and a few bureaucrats in the British India decided the fate of the entire population of the Indian sub-continent, discarding their shared past and common heritage to become two independent nations. Incomplete plan and the unprofessional execution of the partition led to the emergence of two estrange neighbors amidst chaos, hatred and confusion resulted in the death of over a million people in ethnic and religious riots. Not fully satisfied with the outcome of the independence, the leadership

of both the nations resorted to many shortsighted political adventures at the expense of economic and social stability of their countries.

Timing of independence was so unfortunate as it coincided with the commencement of the Cold War in which super powers were busy in filling the vacuums created by the colonial powers. The leadership was influenced by the super power conflict, ignored the much-needed improvements in the living standards and economic structures of their countries. With the exception of a few, majority of the politicians exploited the backward masses to personal political gains. Both nations lost the initial opportunities to settle the infamous Kashmir issue through peaceful means and choose the military means, leading to super power involvement in the region. Persuasion of military options were always at the expense of social and economic development, hence Indian subcontinent remains one of the most backward regions of the world in terms of basic indicators such as per capita income, life expectancy and literacy rate.

By the time the new generation of leaders realized the effects of the past political blunders, they were not in a position to generate sufficient popular support for a peaceful resolution to the Kashmir issue. As a result all the initiatives towards an amicable settlement did not succeed leading both these nations to the brink of nuclear confrontation.

However, few initiatives collectively taken by all the nations in the region prevented escalation of hostilities to greater proportions, providing a platform to work on other fields such as economic, cultural and social to bring the neighbors closer. SAARC, South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation played a vital role at the most crucial time to pursue the Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan to work towards a negotiated solution.

The events that followed the nuclear test in early 1998 opened a new chapter in the Indo-Pakistan relations, leading to number of confidence building measures towards reduction of tension between India and Pakistan. The United States responded swiftly to the change in the attitude of the estranged neighbors and took the initiative to give the leadership and the people confidence in their new approach seeking normalize relations. Future of the Indian sub-continent will depend on the ability of the leadership of India and Pakistan in mustering sufficient support from the masses to go ahead with the current initiatives in confidence building measures. SAARC can continue to play a vital role in improving the social and economic standards of the people in the region as higher literacy rate and better social conditions will make people more mature and susceptible to peaceful options.

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PREFACE

In the recent past there were several events that attracted the world's attention towards Asia. The curiosity of China gaining control of Hong-Kong in 1997 subsided with the infamous financial crisis in the East Asia. Speculation on the modernization of Chinese military heightened with the "missile shock", of the North Korean missile (Taepodong) testing on August 13, 1998. However in the absence of major incidences and partially due to ignorance, the world community continued to keep its eyes away from the region, freely referred as the poorest part of Asia "The Indian Sub Continent".

Suddenly in May 1998, world's attention was drawn to the sub continent, as India carried-out three nuclear tests, deceiving everybody including the spy satellites of the USA. Within weeks Pakistan responded swiftly with five nuclear tests catching the Indian leadership off-guard. Nuclear tests of these two countries not only changed the attitudes of the world community towards them but also changed the tempo of the relations between the two neighbors considerably.

Study of the relations between India and Pakistan clearly reveals the monopoly enjoyed by the leadership of the two

countries at the time of partition over its' people. It is not difficult to understand how the leadership exploited the ignorance and lack of maturity of the people for short-term political gains. Development of relatively minor issues to very high proportion was the outcome of these political misadventures.

Although the transition of the world during the post World War era did have very little impact on the affairs in the Indian sub continent, the Cold War did changed the political outlook in the region and contributed to the deterioration of the Indo-Pakistan relations. Furthermore having failed to handle the diversity and economy effectively, the leadership lost the confidence of the people and became highly sensitive to the moods of the population. It is that appetite of the political leadership in satisfying what they believed as the "people's desire" which led to many hostile encounters between the two neighbors and finally brought the nuclear arms race into the south Asian region.

¹ "Hezira" A Belief of Muslims that they must not live in tyranny or oppression from people of other faiths.

INDO PAKISTAN RELATIONS

At the end of the twentieth century, South Asia ranks among the most insecure regions of the world. This region with over two billion people did not attract its due recognition in the past due to other issues elsewhere in the world, but all eyes were focused on this region when India and Pakistan carried out a series of nuclear tests early last year. The world community today regards relations between India and Pakistan as a vital foundation for the security of the region in particular and the stability of the entire world in general.

Background

Unlike most of other unsolved problems in the world Indo Pakistan issues have a relatively short history of fifty years since the partition of India and creation of Pakistan in 1947. The origin of rivalry between the two nations can be traced back to the British policy of communal politics throughout the subcontinent. V.D.Chopra identifies a British strategy to keep India and Pakistan in "perpetual confrontation" with each other.² It was left to the mastermind of the British bureaucrat R. Coupland to draw up the partition plans for this perpetual

confrontation between India and Pakistan after independence. Coupland was the one who drew up the plan to create the division of Palestine between Arab and Jew.³ Chaos, conflict, disorder, hatred and confusion resulted in India and Pakistan gaining independence. The reasons for this conflict between the two countries were not only political but also economic and social. The issue of Kashmir and the sharing of the waters of the River Indus were the main sources of conflict between the two newly independent nations.

India forged ahead of Pakistan as it had the advantages of size, population and an industrial base unlike Pakistan. India was religiously Hindu in culture and values, whilst Pakistan was an Islam-based society and culture. Effects of the centuries of colonial rule and the bureaucracy influenced the moderate Indian leadership to retain the democratic system of governance and secular status. Sewing the seeds of fear in the minds of the people and riding on the religion progeny leadership in Pakistan paved the way to the establishment of military rule in the country.

However both countries have managed to resolve most of the problems which prevailed at the time of partition during the

past half-century through various means ranging from bloody wars to bilateral negotiations. Kashmir is famous as the best tourist destination of the world and this territory is extremely vital for all the countries in the region not only for its strategic location but mainly because that is the area from which all the major rivers feeding the subcontinent emanate. One who controls this area will also control the flow of the water to the agricultural and industrial bases in India and Pakistan. All efforts to arrive at an amicable settlement to the foremost territorial dispute of Kashmir have failed, endangering the lives of millions of people living in the region. Rohan Gunaratne explaining the South Asian conflict spectrum, lists the following ten issues as threats to the South Asian region.⁴

Ethnicity

Religion

Terrorism

Nuclearization

Illicit weapon transfers

Migration

Refugees

Narcotics

Territorial borders

Sharing of common resources

Although many of these issues are interrelated and applicable in other regions of the world as well, the author highlights the danger of weapon transfers by state actors to non-state actors for short term political gains undermining the stability and security of the entire region. The leadership of the nations in the region has used and most of the time abused ethnicity and religion primarily in the domestic arenas to ensure their own survival. Both in India and in Pakistan the leadership gradually shifted its political agenda to the areas of terrorism and nuclearisation in their quest to gain the upper hand over each other.

Kashmir Issue

Kashmir has remained the pivotal point of relation between the two nations for the past few decades and today it has become one of the most crucial issues in the world. India views this dispute as a continuation of Muslim ideology. The Maharajah of Kashmir was a Hindu ruler, but after independence was undecided whether to join India or Pakistan. The majority of Kashmir population are followers of Islam. In 1947 immediately after independence, Pakistan sent militants of Waziri and Mansud tribes from the Northwest Frontier province to annex Kashmir from the Hindu Maharajah. India complained to the United Nations against the invasion of Kashmir. The UN Commission on India and Pakistan was the result (UNCIP). As per the UN resolutions of 13

August 1948 and 5 January 1949 both India and Pakistan agreed to a cease-fire, demilitarization and plebiscite which was to follow regarding the future of Kashmir. The line of the cease-fire was 700 km long, running from Chammb in the south to Ladakh at grid reference NJ 9842, after which there is a glacier. This is the Siachen Glacier that was disputed and became the battleground between the two countries. India claims Pakistan acquired 5000 square kilometers of its territory with a million people.

Since the end of World War II the cold war between the super powers contributed immensely to, first internationalizing the Kashmir issue and also to stalemating it as an unsolvable problem even after three wars between the two nations. India maintains that the dispute should be resolved through bilateral negotiations and had so far managed to prevent the United Nations from sending peacekeeping forces to Kashmir. On the other hand Pakistan had failed even to muster support among the nations of the Organization of Islamic Conference. Islamabad did not succeed in having Kashmir issue included on the agenda for the Human Rights Convention held in Geneva in February 1996.

Super Power Involvement and the Cold War Era.

In addition to the USA and USSR, the Peoples' Republic of China also played a major role in the rivalry between India and Pakistan. Although the Western Powers including the UK and USA

were against the demand for a separate state of Pakistan, it was the readily available support from the USA in the early fifties, that prompted Pakistan to stand up against her giant neighbor for the lion share of resources and power. During the Cold War the super powers did not hesitate to exploit the situations in the third world to pursue their own national interests and goals, often at the expense of the security and stability of regions outside their immediate sphere of interests. It is quite interesting to discover how the USA supported Pakistan with military hardware, perhaps to prevent the Russians from establishing close relations with the new born country, and at the same time worked with India to check China (an ally of India at that time) from spreading its' tentacles southwards. Two articles appearing in the Indian Defense Review "Insurgency in China" (January 1988) and "The Tibetan rebellion" (July 1988) refer to the covert operations used to destabilize Chinese occupied Tibet by supporting the Khampa rebellion. CIA trainers and the group of officers of the Indian Intelligence Bureau were responsible for the training of anti Chinese Tibetan Khampa nationalists who were infiltrated into Tibet by land and air. Most of the training was conducted in northern India whilst some agents were flown and trained in the mountains of Colorado.⁵ Chinese caught most of the infiltrators and retaliated by supporting the insurgency in northeastern India. These events

led to the breakdown of friendly relations between the two neighbors leading to the brief, but a decisive border war in 1962. China's entry on the scene played a crucial role in South Asia's power balance. India was required to deploy 11 divisions on the border with China, and each mountain division was three times more costly than an ordinary infantry division. Hostile neighbors were thus pinning down India from both the East and West. Pakistan exploited the situation by improving her relations with China and working out a mutual approach aiming at Kashmir.

Chinese involvement also provoked a change in India's foreign policy, in an attempt to align with the West and improve relations with the USA. In 1962 the greatest advocate of the non-aligned movement Jawaharlal Nehru requested arms from the US which was granted. It was President Kennedy who persuaded president Ayub Khan not to seek concessions by exploiting India's problem with China. But by this time Pakistan had established herself firmly with the western powers by becoming a member of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) and the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO). India took the opportunity to forge relations with the USSR once Pakistan had its' treaties with the US (Mutual Security Pact in 1954), followed up with adverse diplomatic maneuvers specially in the UN. The USSR became the closest ally of India, assisting with military

transforms. Soviet leaders visited Kashmir and endorsed the Indian claim over the disputed territory under UN consideration. During the 14 day war between India and Pakistan in September 1965 the US ceased to supply arms to both India and Pakistan. Frequent shifts in the attitudes of the two main actors of the Cold War towards the estranged neighbors were a clear indication of the desire of more powerful nations to compromise subordinate allies when it come to their own national interests and ambitions. The 1971 Indo-Pakistan war saw the deterioration of Pakistan's relationship with the US, as her expectation of US intervention did not materialize in the face of the humiliating defeat in East Pakistan. However the 1971 war, followed by the first Indian nuclear test in 1974, brought China and Pakistan getting closer, including Chinese covert assistance in Pakistan's undeclared nuclear program. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 also changed the attitude of the US towards Pakistan. The US believed the communist invasion was the signal of a Soviet drive to spread communism by linking with pro-Soviet India. Fully aware of the US concerns of the Soviet presence in Afghanistan President Zia-ul-Huq rejected the \$ 400 m aid package offered by President Carter referring it as "peanuts". In 1980 President Reagan offered President Zia a 6 year \$ 3.2 billion aid package and in 1985 another \$ 4 billion package, conveniently forgetting Zia's human rights violations,

symbolized by the imposition of the death penalty on the former Pakistan leader Zulfikhar Ali Bhutto.

With the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan, followed by the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the USSR had a direct impact on the relations between the actors and on the balance of power in the region. Under the Pressler -Mattias- Percy Amendment on nuclear proliferation passed in 1984 the US ended aid on 1 Oct 1990 and placed Pakistan on the "watch list". In July 1993 US Secretary of State Warren Christopher lifted this "watch" with a grim warning against sponsoring terrorism in India. The US State Department publication "Pattern of Terrorism 1995" states: "There are credible reports of official Pakistani support for militants fighting in Kashmir, including for the groups that claimed responsibility for the bombings". The government of Pakistan acknowledged the provision of continuous moral, political and diplomatic assistance but denied allegations of other assistance. However the reports continued in 1997, describing Pakistani support to militants fighting in Kashmir.⁶ The 1997 document mentions Pakistani support to the Harakat-ul-Ansar (HUA), established in 1993 as a world-wide Islamic militant group based in Pakistan and operating mainly in Kashmir. The Hua is cited in Jane's Intelligence Review as the backbone of military resistance to India from Kashmir.⁷ As the end of Cold War reduced US interests in the region, Pakistani

assistance to the Islamic militants turned the US focus away from Pakistan towards the potential market of the massive middle class in India. USA became India's largest trading partner realizing a total trade turnover of US \$4.91 billion in 1991-2 period. US investments in India reached (Indian) RS 10,073 million in 1992.⁸

Leadership

The effects that the political as well as the military leadership of India and Pakistan, had on the relationship between the two countries are far greater than the effects of external forces in worsening the security situation in the region. Initially it was the personal ambitions of the leaders of the partition era, which led to the creation of two nations out of unified India. It was rather unfortunate that the people did not have any say in the issue of partition, as the leadership was in a great hurry to wrest power for themselves. Successive leaders in both countries promoted short-term measures primarily to gain domestic political leverage, thereby compromising the long-term stability of the country and the region. J.N. Dixit, a seasoned politician, points out the reason for the partition as the denial by Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nahru of the ambition of Mohammed Ali Jinnah for the national leadership.⁹ The Indian National Congress successfully resisted the Muslim League's claim to be the exclusive representative of

all the Muslims in pre-partition India. Even after realizing the goal of partition Jinnah was unhappy for not getting the whole of Bengal and Punjab, used to refer his share as a moth-eaten truncated Pakistan. This feeling of frustration led to the volatile approach towards India. Political leadership in Pakistan underwent changes after the death of Jinnah and the assassination of Liaquat Ali. The Political uncertainties, which followed, helped the military dictatorship to gain power. The military lost its clout with the humiliating defeat in East Pakistan. However the political parties of the country were in the hands of elites who depended on military backing for their survival.

In the same way the Indian leadership also failed to understand the reality that the Indian sub-continent never was a single state in the modern sense except during the reign of the great Buddhist Emperor Asoka. Mumtaz Hasan states that the sub-continent was "never at anytime a political unit in the true sense of the word."¹⁰ Even with stable governments under the ruling Congress Party and professing the principles of "Puncha Seela" (Five noble principles) the Indian leadership displayed immaturity in dealing with its neighbors. By sending troops to Kashmir without allowing the natural justice to take its turn, thereafter antagonizing friendly China without resorting to a negotiated settlement. The Indian leadership failed to take

advantage of their unchallenged domestic power for over three decades from the time of partition. The feudalistic-minded military leadership played a vital role in preventing the political leadership from pursuing non-military methods to settle initial disputes with their neighbors. On the other hand, the Chinese leadership was very cautious and patient in dealing with its neighbors, obviously working on a long-term plan to emerge as a world power. China showed maturity and flexibility and kept other actors guessing their true intentions.

However looking back at the past half a century, one will recognize over-reliance upon the intelligence apparatus and the adventurism of a few narrow minded officials as the main cause of the deteriorating relations amongst the neighbors in the region. These two factors led to the arming of non-state actors against each other, which was disastrous to those who initiated violent measures. The proliferation of small arms increased violence to unprecedeted levels as the leaders lost control and became victims of their own designs. Both Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi were brutally murdered by the militants they themselves nurtured. Ali Bhutto was executed by the man who he himself had selected to manipulate the political arena to achieve ambitious goals. Zia-ul-Huq died under mysterious circumstances in a plane crash leaving room for gradual democratization of the political stage of the Pakistan.

With the passage of time new generations replaced the ones that underwent the trauma of partition, with over a million killed by religious riots, and millions of families on both sides of the divide becoming homeless and loosing all that they possessed. Changes in the behaviors and attitudes of the new generation are quite obvious, as the new leadership displays maturity and is more flexible in dealing with strategic affairs. The shift of power to the younger generation witnessed changes not only in foreign and defense affairs but also in the economic and social spheres. In India, major changes were seen in the economy, making it more open and liberal as opposed to the closed economy practiced for nearly a half a century. With the exception of Vajpayee's minority coalition government, which came to power on a religious ticket, all other successive governments since the mid-eighties have taken many confidence-building measures in the right direction. Changes in the military with new generation of leaders have also facilitated the politicians taking measures to improve the relations with their neighbors.

In Pakistan a prominent source of change was the dwindling of the influence that the military had enjoyed for decades over the government. This trend exposed the political leadership to criticism and made them accountable for their action. The new atmosphere in both countries allowed the people to have a closer

look at themselves, and also to understand each other better. The emergence of a free media and the independence of the judiciary had a direct impact on the behavior of decision-makers. J. N. Dixit, who once served as a middle-level desk officer in the Indian mission in Islamabad in 1964 and again, as the head of the same mission for two and half years from 1989 to 1991, explains the attitudes of Pakistani society towards India. In his book on Indo Pakistan relations He highlights the differences of attitudes from province to province, and points out that only among the people of Pakistan's Punjab State does one find the bitterness of partition and pre-partition politics. He also states that the Indians and Pakistanis interact with each other with warmth and spontaneity at the human and personal level, especially when they meet in another country. Although this is not a unique phenomenon these attitudes and changes of behavior are positive signs that the leadership can exploit in their endeavor to forge friendly relations between the two countries.

The Nuclear Gambit

India and Pakistan have now reached a new level of confrontation with the development of nuclear and missile technology. This was proved beyond doubt with the detonation of India's nuclear devices followed closely by Pakistan nuclear tests. The Indian nuclear program was launched in 1948 with the

setting up of the Atomic Energy commission to advise the government on nuclear issues. The Institute of Fundamental Research undertook the responsibility of providing a constant supply of scientists and engineers for the purpose. A separate Department of Atomic Energy was created in 1954 in the Ministry of Natural Resources and Scientific Research. India realized at the outset that it was not possible to embark on a worthwhile nuclear program without the cooperation of technically advanced countries. They negotiated with the USA, UK, France, Belgium and Canada for the required equipment and materials to develop existing Indian resources. The first nuclear reactor was commissioned at Trombay named Apsara, with Uranium from UK. The Indian Prime Minister Nehru declared that Indian efforts to embark on a nuclear program were only for peaceful purposes with a priority on power production.

The explosion of the Chinese nuclear device in 1962 had its effects on the Indian nuclear program. The Indian Prime Minister at the time, Lal Bahadur Shastri statement in parliament was the first sign that India was embarking on a nuclear weapons program.¹¹ It gained momentum with the launching of China's first nuclear missile in October 1966. Indian concerns were more critical when China launched its first satellite in 1970. The complete superiority of India in the Indo-Pak war of 1971 was an encouragement for India to pursue its nuclear program to deter

Pakistan and encourage China to reduce its hostile attitude against India. Indian efforts materialized when the Indian Atomic Energy Commission detonated its first nuclear device at Pokran in the Rajasthan desert in May 1974.

As expected there had to be a reaction from Pakistan. Pakistan had embarked on a nuclear program in the mid 1950s when the Pakistan Energy Commission was established. In 1965 the Pakistan Institute of Science and Technology was established at Nilore near Rawalpindi as a research and training facility for the scientists and technicians in the nuclear field. With the cooperation of the USA Pakistan set up the Pakistan Atomic Research Reactor under the safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). India had no such monitoring. Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto recognized that India was the most likely aggressor against Pakistan, and that a nuclear option was the answer. He pushed the nuclear program to counter what he saw as the Indian program for hegemony in the region. Bhutto stated in 1974 to Henry Kissinger that Pakistan would "eat grass" if necessary to go nuclear¹².

The US assumed the role of active mediator in the nuclear question beginning in about 1989, and stressed the fact that Pakistan had accelerated certain aspects of the program for uranium enrichment to prepare for its use in nuclear weapons. By all reports Pakistan had put together "a nuclear device" and

refused to roll back to the pre-1989 level. In response, in September 1990 the US did not grant the certificate of "waiver" under the Pressler Amendment and from October 1990 American aid to Pakistan was withheld.

While the nuclear gambit in South Asia took a new turn in the early nineties, a five-nation conference was proposed to discuss the nuclear issue. In June 1991 the US, Russia, China and Pakistan attended to discuss a nuclear free zone in South Asia. India refused to participate. In spite of the fact that many vital events in the Asian nuclear issue taking place in the mid nineties, the attention of the world community was focused on Bosnia allowing something like an interference free period for the players in the South Asia to pursue their nuclear programs. Although it had gained the status of the solitary super power, and substantiated it with the victory in the Gulf War the USA did not succeed in harnessing world opinion against the emerging threat in the Indian sub-continent. This may be partially due to the ability of India to question the sincerity of the existing nuclear club in their quest for total nuclear disarmament. When the nuclear club countries (the p-5) demanded a freeze on nuclear and missile programs and asked India and Pakistan to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) both rejected those as manifestation of the double standards of the nuclear weapons

states. They pointed out that the nuclear powers had failed to fulfil their own obligations under the NPT to move meaningfully towards global nuclear disarmament. Pakistan's Prime Minister went on to state, "some nuclear weapon states have sought to justify their retention of nuclear weapons on the basis of the doctrine of nuclear deterrence, when none of them is threatened directly or indirectly in the post-cold war era."

As concern over the nuclear gambit gathered momentum many experts started commenting on the subject. Joseph S. Nye Jr., former assistant secretary of defense and dean of the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University points out that power in the 21st century will not depend on brute nuclear force but on economic growth. He goes on to elaborate that nuclear weapons are not power equalizers, hinting to India and Pakistan that they cannot expect to blast their way into an imagined great power club.¹³ He also strongly urges the international community to pressure India and Pakistan to sign NPT and CTBT by linking the Indian claim for a permanent seat in the Security Council and the lifting of sanctions to the nuclear issue. Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbot, who has undertaken many trips to India and Pakistan, drew comparisons between the conditions prevailed during the Cold War between USA and USSR and current Indo-Pakistan relations. He stated that there was more than one narrow escape during the Cold War and explained that India and

Pakistan have even less margin for error than the US and USSR did over Cuba and Berlin.¹⁴

In an article to the "Washington Post" Henry Kissinger points out the futility of punitive sanctions and suggests that American policy move from treating India and Pakistan as the problem and to incorporating them into the solution as partners in a non-proliferation regime.

Sanctions on India and Pakistan

The US imposed more than \$20 billion in economic sanctions on India and similar sanctions on Pakistan as well. However the impact of sanctions on Pakistan will be much greater, as she is heavily dependent on foreign aid. Pakistan's interest payments on foreign commercial debts amount to between \$200 and \$500 a month. Visiting the test site in Chaghi district, Prime Minister Sharif vowed to fight sanctions and stated that Pakistan had chosen the path of self-reliance, self-respect and dignity. With a stronger and more self-reliant economy India is more confidant in facing the sanctions of the US and Japan. However the economic sanctions took another dimension when the USA Senate voted 98 to 0 to ease sanctions fearing a drop in American exports. Former President Carter condemned US policy on nuclear proliferation for taking action against India and Pakistan without taking substantive steps reducing its' own arsenal. Within a few months of imposition of sanctions the White House

started feeling that waiver of sanctions would help Washington to negotiate with the two governments to contain the nuclear arms race¹⁵. To the surprise of everybody, China did not support sanctions on India. Even with irritating remarks by the Indian defense Minister Fernandes, Indian relations with China were on the mend and the two countries seemed to have put their past conflicts behind them. It is rather unusual to note how the sanctions imposed to punish the two estranged neighbors had brought them together, at least on the issue of facing the effects of the sanctions. It is time for India and Pakistan to understand the sensitivity of the international business community to invest in countries, which may go to war.

De-escalation of Tension and Confidence Building measures.

There are many signs of improvements in the relations between the two countries in the recent past. Even though the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was referred as the most moribund of such regional organizations it did bring the two leaders of the countries together to discuss bilateral issues at a time of extreme tension.¹⁶ SAARC also provided the best opportunities for the countries to interact in other fields such as cultural, economic and sports. This resulted in reducing tension among the people of the countries, allowing the leadership to workout the agenda for confidence building measures. Commenting on Indo-Pakistan relations Ashraf

Jehangir Qazi, Pakistan high commissioner in India points out the need to adopt a different approach and to do something that they have not done before to normalize relations between the two countries. He goes on to state "It may be unfair for us to leave the two governments alone and expect them to do everything. We need to mould public opinion by taking help from academia, the media the business community and various components of the states both in India and Pakistan".¹⁷

Opening of the bus route between Delhi and Islamabad and the resumption of the test cricket fixtures between India and Pakistan, among other friendly events, surprised the international observers watching the South Asian region. At a time when everybody expected heightened tension between the two rival nations, it is extremely encouraging to see the opposite happening. The rare signs of maturity on the part of the national leadership and the courage displayed by them in facing international pressure are positive steps towards the ultimate solution in bringing in a most needed stability and the prosperity to this region.

Both countries are now focusing their attention on the economy rather than taking short-term measures for political and other gains. Moving away from dependency upon out-side powers will also bring them closer, working towards mutual co-operation.

There were many signs of political maturity in the leadership of both India and Pakistan. Prime Minister Sharif recently sacked the Army chief who demanded more power for the military. Almost all the prominent politicians and citizens did not approve of the irritating remarks by Indian defense minister aimed at China and Pakistan.

Other neighbors also can and will play an important role in bringing the two nations together to face future challenges in the economic field. SAARC is gathering momentum and has already increased trade among the members considerably. The Mature approach of China has been one of the major contributions towards the de-escalation of tension between the two countries.

Initiative taken by the Clinton administration are paying off as it has paved the way for the current state visit of the Indian Prime Minister to Pakistan. President Clinton issued a statement following the summit praising the courage and leadership of the two Prime Ministers.¹⁸ Accepting Prime Minister Sharif's invitation Prime Minister Vajpayee traveled to Pakistan on the inaugural run of the first-ever passenger bus service between Delhi and Lahore. "Bus Diplomacy" followed the February 20-21 summit in Lahore, between the two Prime Ministers. The summit produced the joint declaration referred to as the "Lahore Declaration". The document enumerate four bilateral initiatives and eight confidence building measures including Advance

notification of ballistic missile tests. Prime Minister Vajpayee described his journey as a "defining moment in the sub-continents history". Commenting on the new developments and the need for peaceful resolution of differences, Prime Minister Sharif stated that "neither Pakistan nor India has gained anything from the conflict and tensions of the past fifty years". The moderate approach of the Clinton administration in dealing with India and Pakistan can also be pursued by the other leading powers to help the two nations in solving their perennial problems.

Conclusion

A Study of the relationship between India and Pakistan can not be concluded without looking at the changes and developments that have taken place since the partition of the Indian sub continent a half-century ago. At the time of partition there were 275 million Hindus which included 70 million untouchables. 35 million Muslims, 6 million Christians and 6 million Sikhs. 11 million Holy men, a community of lepers as large as the population of Switzerland, and of beggars as large as the population of Holland. More than a million died of malnutrition annually and 300 million lived on the brink of starvation. There were 15 official languages and 845 dialects. Most striking was the alarming low literacy rate of 17%.¹⁹

Considering these facts one has to realize how far these two countries have come to become the hub of the fastest growing region in the world. It is obvious that the major stumbling blocks to friendly relations between the two countries are poverty and the low literacy rate. A huge labor force employed in foreign countries brings a lot of money to the villages both in India and in Pakistan, helps the people to raise their standard of living, and making them much more mature so that the political leadership no longer requires resorting to short term petty politics.

The reforms that have taken place in the judiciary systems and the media have had a great impact on relations between the two countries. Therefore it is important that these reforms must be continued without interruptions to achieve desired results. The critics, who see only the negative aspects of the conditions of the region and fear of a nuclear holocaust there, should also take into the consideration the fact that it is nearly thirty years since India and Pakistan fought the last war.

However it is only the solution to the Kashmir problem that will bring lasting peace between the two giants of the South Asia. The US Ambassador Frank Wisner once stated "solution does not lie in revisiting the troubled history of the Kashmir dispute", reiterating the need for a fresh look at the

assumptions of both sides and arriving at new conclusions.²⁰ As the conflict kept the people of Kashmir segregated from rest of the world there is an urgent need to break the geographical and political isolation of Kashmir. As the will of the people of Kashmir becomes the most crucial ingredient of the ultimate solution to the conflict both India and Pakistan should take steps to condition the minds of the people by introducing systematic and sustainable development of both parts of Kashmir.

Commenting on South Asia Policy Jeffry E Key gives a good account of how the attitudes of the US administration towards South Asia changed time to time. He invites the policy makers and their academic critics to have a broader look at the aspirations of both these nations and to recognize their right to play a dominant role in the affairs of the region. He also argues in favor of India's claim over Kashmir as "Kashmir has been a part of India for half a century."²¹

ENDNOTES

¹ "Hezira" A Belief of Muslims that they must not live in tyranny or oppression from people of other faiths.

² "Studies in Indo-Pakistan Relations" Edited by V.D.Chopra, Petriot Publishers, New Delhi. 1984.

³ "Anatomy of a Flawed Inheritance", J N Dixit, Konrk Publishers Ptv Ltd, Delhi. 1995.

⁴ "Light weapons in South Asia; Background paper for the third international workshop on small arms. Katmandu, Nepal, 22-23 May 97.

⁵ "The secret war in Tibet" by Michel Peissel. Little Brown Boston. 1972. " Tibet in Revolt" by George Neilson Patterson. Faber and Feber. London 1960. " CIA and the Cult of Intelligence" by Victor Marchetti. Dell pub Co. New York 1989.

⁶ "Patterns of Global Terrorism" US Department of State, 1997. " The Nation" Published by the Government of India.7 Nov 1997.

⁷ Jane's Intelligence Review, Oct 97 Vol. 9.

⁸ " American Interests In India" George K. Tanham, Global Affairs, fall 1993.

⁹ "Anatomy of a flawed inheritance" J.N. Dixit Konark Publishers Delhi 1995.

¹⁰ " The background of the partition of the Indo-Pakistan Sub-Continent" Mumtaz Hasan, "The Partition of India; Policies and Perspectives 1935-1947", edited by C.H. Philips & Doreen Wainright, George Allen & Unwind LTD 1970.

¹¹ "Indian Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shasthri's statement in parliament" " I cannot say that present policy of nuclear pacifism is deep rooted".

¹² "Anatomy of a Flawed Inheritance" J N Dixit Konark Publishers Pvt Ltd Delhi. 1995.

¹³ "Nuclear Advice for South Asia" Joseph S. Nye Jr. Washington Post Article.

¹⁴ Speech on "India and Pakistan" Strobe Talbot, Deputy Secretary of State. At Brookings Institute, Washington, DC, Nov 12 1998.

¹⁵ "Clinton may face tough fight for sanctions waiver" Article by Adam Entous

¹⁶ "Beyond Tilting Both Ways, A New Post-Cold War South Asia Policy" Jeffry E. Key. "Asian Affairs"

¹⁷ "India-Pakistan Relations" by Ashraf Jehangir Qazi "Journal of the United Service Institution of India. April-June 1998.

¹⁸ "Statement before the US House of Representatives Washington, DC." By Karl F. Inderfurth, Assistant Secretary for South Asian Affairs, on March 3 1999.

¹⁹ "Freedom at Midnight" Tarang Paperbacks, 1975, Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi.

²⁰ "Address by the US Ambassador Frank Wisner" to the Pakistan Army Command and Staff College, Quetta, July 1996.

²¹ "Asian Affairs" Article by Jeffrey E Key, "Beyond tilting both ways"

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